

**Andrew Jackson to Hugh Lawson White, April 9, 1831,
from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by
John Spencer Bassett.**

TO HUGH L. WHITE.

Washington, April 9, 1831.¹

¹ See p. 257n., *ante*.

Strictly confidential

My D'r sir, When first elected President of the United States my first concern was to select a cabinet of honest talented men, and good re publicans, amongst whom, I might have one, from personal acquaintance, I could with safety confide. You and Major Eaton were the only men with whom I had such acquaintance and intimacy that insured me my entire confidence were well placed, (and who could be thought of to fill such a place) one of whom I thought it necessary for the success of my administration, should be in my Cabinet. Both of you had taken a prominent share in my election, which drew me from my chosen retirement. I therefore thought I had claims upon you to aid me in the administration of the Government. With those feelings, on the close of the election in 1828, I addressed you, asking you to come into my Cabinet, and requesting if any thing of an imperious nature should deprive me of your services, make your determination known to major Eaton, as I calculated that one or the other of you would.

When I reached Washington, for reasons which you assigned as imperious, you declined, and it was with great reluctance and much. difficulty, and persuasion, major Eaton consented. He has made known to me his intention to withdraw, and has tendered his resignation. It is with the greatest reluctance I part with him, but *his decision is final*. You

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know the confidence I have in him, but knowing how much he has unjustly suffered I cannot longer detain him contrary to his wishes and to his happiness. He has been cruelly persecuted, and from a combination of sources, that until lately, some of them, I did not suspect.

I have in my reply to Major Eatons letter of resignation, closed mine thus, "I will avail my self of the earliest opportunity to obtain some qualified friend to succeed you, and until then, I must solicit that the acceptance of your resignation may be deferred." I have therefore a right to claim your aid as my faithful friend. Eaton has determined to retire. The reasons that influenced your determination in 1829, does not now exist. it is true, you have drank the cup of bitterness to the dregs,² your bereavements have been great. With me you can live (I have a large room for you) who can sympathise for your sufferings, and you can keep your little son and daughter with you and attend to his education, and the duties of your office will give employ to your mind. This must be employed to preserve life, and in this employment you will not only render important services to your country, but an act of great friendship to me. I cannot hesitate to believe, but that you will yield your consent. I shall await your answer with much anxiety.

² See note I; see also White to Jackson, June 15, 1831, p. 295, *post*.

I pray you to look about and you will see the great difficulty, not to say impracticability, of supplying your place in case of refusal, and I therefore feel the more justified in adding the claims of private friendship, to considerations of public character. you must not my dear friend refuse my request. If at any time you should find the duties of the office too much for your health or other opportunity should offer to place you in a situation more congenial with your past pursuits, we will have time and opportunity to prepare for the gratification of your wishes, which shall continue as they have heretofore been the rule of my conduct in whatever relates to yourself always, satisfied that they will be none other than such as are reasonable.

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Mr Van. Buren has also intimated to me his intention to withdraw. of course, a reorganisation of my Cabinet (proper) will be made. The Postmaster General will only remain. When Eaton and Van Buren goes, justice to them, and to myself, and that electioneering scenes in congress may cease, or the intrigues exposed, will induce me to reorganise my Cabinet. This I regret, but have a long time foresaw—admonished, but could not control—my Cabinet must be a unit. I sincerely regret to loose Eaton and Van Buren, two more independent republicans does not exist, who have laboured with me, with an eye single to the prosperity, of the union. Still mr Van Buren, was singled out as a plotter. The cry of plot, plot in mr Calhouns Book brought me in mind of the old story—rogue, cries rogue rogue first, to draw the attention from himself, that he might escape. I say to you frankly, that Van Buren is one of the most frank men I ever knew, with talents combined with common sense, not rarely to be met with— *a true man* with no guile.

With my kind salutations to you and your little family and your connections believe me your friend